

## PROGRAM

Continued from Page 14

ing recognition, Wright-McIntosh said. Last June Eugene Mayor Jeff Miller led a five-person delegation to Irkutsk.

Unlike past delegations, this visit focused more on industrial pursuits rather than cultural interests. Each of the five members took with them written proposals from twenty Eugene businesses hoping to establish trade ties in the Soviet Union.

Although no exchange rate exists between U.S. dollars and Soviet rubles, there is a way for international business to exist. For years two national U.S. companies have done business in the Soviet Union: McDonalds and the Pepsi corporation.

An agreement was made with Soviet officials using credits instead of a direct monetary system. When sanctions are eventually lifted the credits will be repaid at a designated exchange rate.

Building a trusting relationship is part of perpetuating a long-term investment and this can be done by maintaining positive cultural ties through the

Sister Cities Program, Miller said. "It's peace through diplomacy."

Miller believes the ESCP will assist Eugene in becoming involved in world wide economic trade. By encouraging reciprocal foreign investment now, "We will be prepared when the ruble eventually is backed on the foreign trade market," Miller said.

Oregon is already experiencing economic and cultural investments from Kakegawa. A group of Japanese investors has purchased a section of farm land in Junction City and they intend to build a cultural center that will be open to the public.

The Japanese are eager to establish a business relationship in Oregon and a Japanese investment group is looking seriously at a prospect in Eugene, Miller said.

Interest in delegates who visit Eugene is usually more culturally oriented on our end, and more economic for them, said Wright-McIntosh. One reason for this, at least for those from the Soviet Union, is the rapid democratic changes occurring in their country.

A delegation traveling to Eugene in September will be led by the Vice Mayor of Irkutsk and is interested in meeting with Eugene City Council members to learn more about the operation of a democratic city, said Wright-McIntosh.

"It makes you think about why things are the way they are...you don't take your culture for granted," she said.

The basic premise of the ESCP is to promote understanding and respect among nations. This is done on an individual level through the delegations, and cultural exchange may help to correct distorted impressions of life in another country.

To further this process, the members of the four committees would like to see more diversification of the delegates who travel to Eugene's sister cities. People traveling in a delegation meet two requirements; they have the time, and the money to support a trip, Wright-McIntosh said.

This is restrictive for local college students who generally possess neither, but the ESCP is hoping to establish a scholarship program eventually to assist

those who would otherwise not be able to make a trip.

The Irkutsk committee has lead the way in assisting the youth of the community to be part of informal delegations. In August, the second group of local high school students this year returned from the Soviet Union.

These students raised all of the funds for their trip including; tickets, visa processing costs, insurance and group gifts to city officials, educators, and Soviet students.

The cost just to get to the Soviet Union is close to \$ 2,000. Once there student expenses are completely covered by the host community sister city program.

The same is true of the Irkutsk delegates who travel to Eugene. The greatest expense for Eugene's Irkutsk Committee is the cost of hotel rooms in New York or Washington D.C. when the students first arrive.

Soviets who travel to the United States are still restricted in their access to the country, despite the warming of relations between the two nations.

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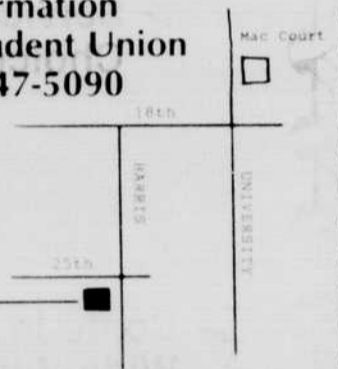
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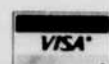
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